



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services
Council on Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Testimony for
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget
Health and Hospitals Public Budget Hearings (Room 2C) 4:30pm March 6, 2015

Good evening, my name is Patti Silva and I serve as the Chair of the Council on Developmental Services. The Council is currently comprised of twelve members, ten of whom have family members living with a wide range and severity of intellectual and physical disabilities, and one Self Advocate. Some of our family members are supported through their day by both state and private providers, while others live with their families at home with no supports.

I am here tonight to speak about the proposed budget for the Department of Developmental Services because the final outcome of this DDS budget is urgent, as it impacts not only our families, but the thousands of I/DD individuals and their families throughout CT.

The Council's statutory duties under C.G.S. Sec. 17a-270(b) include the responsibility to:

"...recommend to the Governor and to the General Assembly such legislation as will in its judgment improve the care and training of persons with intellectual disability."

In our view, the recent DDS rescissions, and the proposed budget cuts for FY 2016 and 2017, are contrary to DDS's goal of improving the care and training of persons with intellectual disability. They also drastically undercut the ability of the Working Group created last June to improve services for these individuals and reduce the length of time some 2,000 families now spend on the waiting list for DDS residential support.

We are unanimous in our concern of cuts in three major areas and urge your restoration of funding for the following programs.

Voluntary Services Program – The Governor's budget proposes a \$20MM or 60% reduction in funding for VSP which supports children and adolescents with ID, Autism and/or severe behavioral health needs.

**Testimony for
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget
Health and Hospitals Public Budget Hearings (Room 2C) 4:30pm March 6, 2015**

Page 2 of 3

Employment Opportunities and Day Services – The budget removes over \$10MM of funding for day supports for high school graduates, and those who may transfer out of STS and other long term care facilities. In addition, \$5MM of 2015 Employment Opportunities and Day Service rescissions were annualized removing \$10.5MM from the 2016 budget for existing cases while allocating \$11.9MM to Day and Residential services for individuals aging out of school funded programs and DCF.

The travesty of the cuts for new graduates is visited not only on the parents of those with IDD, but on the young adults as well who face a gap in the growth they achieved in their school years. The inevitable result is loss of the progress previously gained as they sit home without supports or meaningful activity. How can we let this happen?

Are private provider programs to close for lack of funding for existing programs? Are the families of approximately 300 graduates expected to quit their jobs to care for their children who no longer have a day program to go to?

Community Residential Services – While the \$8MM for 100 older waiting list individuals living at home was annualized, no new money was proposed to make further progress against the waiting list. The state cannot wait to begin a systematic reduction of the 2,000 individuals on the list. As the population ages, families need more help, not less.

These cuts are not only devastating to our families, but to the people and their families who provide services to our children. Most who work for private providers have not received raises, may have had benefit cuts, and are forced to work multiple jobs, which leads to a high turnover rate. This directly impacts the quality and continuity of the services that are provided.

All of these reductions and the prior rescissions have come in the context of chronic underfunding of DDS and have, in fact, been disproportionately visited on that agency.

As a legislature, as a state, we need to remain sensitive and respectful to the wide array of individual needs served by DDS. We have a system based on need but the proposed budget is far from adequate in meeting that need. On behalf of the Council we ask you to restore the \$40MM of cuts indicated above to ensure that individuals and families receive the services they need for appropriate care of their family members.

Respectfully yours,
Council on Developmental Services

Connecticut Council on Developmental Services Members
Patti Silva, Chair, Wethersfield
Adrienne Benjamin, Vice Chair, New Britain
Jamie Lazaroff, Secretary, Hampton

**Testimony for
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget
Health and Hospitals Public Budget Hearings (Room 2C) 4:30pm March 6, 2015**

Page 3 of 3

John N. Frost, Essex
David Hadden, Simsbury
Frederick Lenz, Simsbury
Diana Mennone, Woodbury
Sheila Mulvey, Southington
Neil D. Stein, MD, FAAP, West Hartford
Deborah Ullman, West Hartford
Lisa Weisinger-Roland, West Hartford
Patrick Vingo, South Norwalk